

Building a Highly Competitive Horticulture Industry in Kenya



Farmers in Homabay County display their sweet potato harvest for sale along the main road.

"In Kenya ... we support a horticulture program focused on highly nutritious crops that women commonly produce in market, like sweet potatoes and butternut squash. Research obviously shows that income in the hands of women translates into better nutrition and health for their children. When we invest in women producers, we get a double benefit—now and in the next generation."

—U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton highlighting the work of KHCP as she addressed the Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome May 6, 2011

What is Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project (KHCP)?

Kenya Horticulture Competitiveness Project is a five-year, USAID-funded, "Feed the Future" initiative launched in 2010. It aims to benefit over 200,000 smallholder farmers with more income, better food security, and improved nutrition. In addition, by working with all links in the "value chain," it enhances competitiveness in the horticultural sector by helping farmers:

- Grow more and better fruits, vegetables, nuts and flowers
- Increase processing of horticultural produce—for instance connecting fruit-farmers to juice-makers
- Link small-scale farmers with markets both in Kenya and abroad
- Improve agricultural policy.

How does KHCP help farmers?

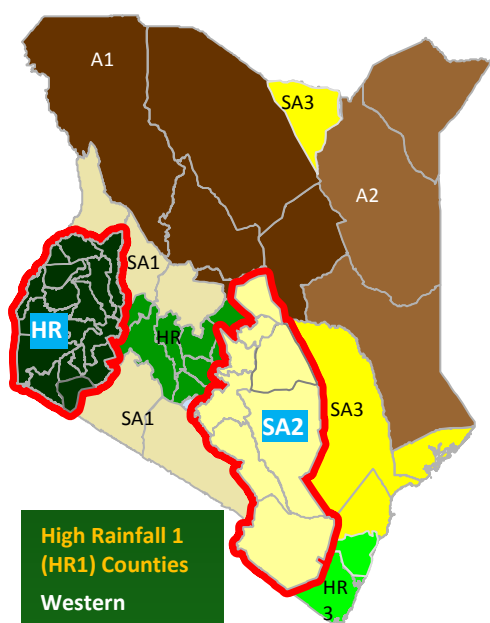
- **Enhancing productivity** – KHCP links small-scale farmers to input suppliers for improved and certified seeds and other planting materials. It assists farmers with testing of soil and water, and water harvesting. It creates demonstration farms and provides training in crop production, modern farm management and nutrition.
- **Increase processing** – To enable smallholders to maximize income, KHCP assists farmers to upgrade produce quality, introduce new products, and add value to products before marketing. Interventions include building capacity of farmers in grading and standardizing, processing, packaging, branding, postharvest handling, and risk mitigation.
- **Improve marketing and trade** – The project is organizing a Market Information System that provides accurate, real-time market data to stakeholders in the horticulture industry, including policy makers. Close monitoring of trends in export markets enables project specialists to provide strategic analysis on key issues affecting growth and sustainability.
- **Improve business environment** – As part of its work to build a thriving horticulture sector, KHCP facilitates consultations among growers, processors, exporters, policy makers, and other stakeholders, on government policy, market infrastructure, input supply, and certification, and other issues.

Who works with KHCP?

KHCP is designed to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification and improved market access. Therefore it works in partnership with a wide range of public and private-sector players to deliver technical and marketing services. These include the government of Kenya, agricultural input suppliers, processors and marketers (domestic, regional and international). Women are active participants in all KHCP activities.



KHCP grows strong seedlings— critical in improving Kenya's passion fruit sub-sector. Five passion-fruit nurseries have been established, and 2,500 farmers trained in seedling management.



High Rainfall 1 (HR1) Counties

Western Province

1. Bungoma
2. Busia
3. Kakamega
4. Vihiga

Nyanza Province

1. Homa Bay
2. Kisii
3. Kisumu
4. Migori
5. Nyamira
6. Siaya

Rift Valley Province

1. Bomet
2. Kericho
3. Elgeyo/Marak

Semi-Arid 2 (SA2)

- ##### Eastern Province
1. Kitui
 2. Machakos
 3. Makueni
 4. Meru
 5. Tharaka-Nithi

Coast Province

2. Taita/Taveta

Locations KHCP works.

Focus crops and products

The target value chains in the high-rainfall zone include: avocado, Irish potatoes, orange-fleshed-sweet potato, butternut, passion fruit, banana, indigenous leafy vegetables, kales, chillies, tomatoes, and “filler” flowers.

In the semi-arid region, products include: orange-fleshed sweet potato, yellow passion fruit, chillies, pulses, butternut, fresh cut vegetables, mango, Asian vegetables, and papaya, among others.

What has KHCP accomplished so far?

- Since June 2010, more than 16,000 farmers (52% women) have received tailored, field-based training in farming methods and technologies such as drip irrigation.
- KHCP agronomists have conducted 1,300 technical assistance visits and established 276 demonstration sites, 72 of which are dedicated to seed and root stock multiplication.
- KHCP has facilitated the development of a Market Information System to provide accurate, real-time market data to stakeholders in the horticulture industry, including policy makers.
- Project has produced three international market-analysis reports covering sweet potato, ABE chilli, and avocado, and shared them with stakeholders. Close monitoring of international export trends enables project specialists to provide strategic analysis to policy makers and other stakeholders.
- Analysis is underway to determine Kenya's consumption trends, regional trade flows and global competitiveness on key horticultural products. This will inform the Kenyan public and private sector on appropriate strategies and crops to adopt in the near and long term.
- Provided 26 technical-assistance visits to factories and client sites in addition to four training workshops on safe food processing standards. A post-harvest handling manual was developed and distributed to help producers reduce product loss.
- Facilitated training events in fair trade and organic certification. The project facilitated the adoption of international standards by 120 smallholder flower farmers, thereby guaranteeing access to international markets.

Project coordination offices

KHCP activities are coordinated through offices located in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kibwezi, Thika, Kisumu, Eldoret, and Bungoma.

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